India's Stand on Afghan War

2653. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Osama bin Laden and the Talibans were being patronised and encouraged by some advanced developed countries to subserve into own national interest for a long time:

(b) if so, whether the same country could be morally capable of fighting out the menace globally;

(c) if so, whether Indian Government's response to the Afghan war should be ascertained accordingly; and

(d) if so what is the present situation in respect to our role globally?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) Government has always been aware of the antecedents of Osama bin Laden and the Taliban as also of its strong ties that Taliban continued to have with Pakistan, including with its military forces.

(b) The Taliban, Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network had turned Afghanistan into a centre of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking. Even before the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11th September, the United Nations Security Council had adopted resolutions, calling on the Taliban to hand over Osama Bin Laden, stop harbouring terrorist groups and close down all terrorist training camps.

(c) Government has consistently advocated that terrorism is a global problem that requires a comprehensive international response targeted against terrorism and its sponsors everywhere in the world. It is also well established that the Taliban and the Al Qaeda network have links with terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir. Government's support to the ongoing military campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan is, therefore, in keeping with India's national interest.

(d) Government has played a strong role in raising international awareness about the menace of terrorism and in strengthening global cooperation, including in the United Nations, in combating it. Government has also been actively engaged in international consultations on the post-Taliban political settlement and economic reconstruction of Afghanistan, including in the recently concluded meeting of Afghan factions held in Bonn, Germany, that led to an agreement on an interim Administration in Afghanistan.